

REMARKS

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Various of the claims are amended herein.

New claims 27-32 are added. Generally, new claims 27-32 are somewhat similar to claims 6-11, respectively. Support for the new claims is found, for example, on page 33, line 20, through page 36, line 24, of the specification.

The Office Action indicates that claim 11 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, new claim 33 is added, and corresponds to "objected to" claim 11 written in independent form. It is respectfully submitted that new claim 33 should be allowable.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 6-15 and 27-33 are currently pending.

II. OBJECTION TO CLAIMS 12-15

The claims are amended herein to overcome the rejection.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 6-10 AND 12-15 UNDER 35 USC 103(E) AS BEING ANTICIPATED BY TANAKA ET AL (US PATENT NO. 6,509,533)

In the present invention as recited, for example, in claim 6, a bending fulcrum of the frame structure lies at a downwardly offset with respect to a line of extension connecting respective axes of rotation of the rollers together when the frame structure is not bent.

Please note that claim 6 is amended to recite that the bending fulcrum lies at a "downwardly offset" with respect to the line of extension. Similar amendments are made to claim 12. See, for example, bending fulcrum 52 in FIGS. 3 and 4, and page 35, lines 5-9, of the specification.

In the Office Action, the Examiner refers to FIGS. 9(c), 11 and 14 of Tanaka. These figures show a pivoting shaft 35a. However, as illustrated in FIG. 12 of Tanaka, and as described in column 15, lines 12-21, of Tanaka, pivoting shaft 35a is located at an upper side of base line P in FIG. 12.

This configuration in Tanaka is significantly different than that recited, for example, in claim 6, where the bending fulcrum lies at a "downwardly offset" with respect to the line of

extension.

In various embodiments of the present invention, with the bending fulcrum downwardly offset with respect to the line of extension, various problems can occur. For example, as described on page 35, lines 3-15, of the specification of the present application, a frame structure may undesirably bend towards the upper transport surface of the endless transport belt.

Therefore, as recited, for example, in claim 6, a stop member is provided "for inhibiting the frame structure from being bent towards the other of the runs of the transport belt when the frame structure is in the straight position". Claim 12 recites similar features.

As Tanaka does not have a bending fulcrum which is downwardly offset as recited, for example, in claim 6, Tanaka will not experience the above-described problems of the frame structure bending when the frame structure is in the straight position. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Tanaka does not disclose or suggest a stop member as recited, for example, in claim 6.

Although the above comments are specifically directed to claim 6, it is respectfully submitted that the comments will be helpful in understanding various differences of various other claims over the cited reference.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection is overcome.

IV. IDS

The outstanding Office Action includes a Form PTO-1449 of the IDS filed January 28, 2004. The IDS was filed to submit references from the parent application. However, the Examiner did not acknowledge the references, and indicated that the Examiner did not have copies of the references.

Please note that an additional IDS was filed concurrently herewith. This additional IDS includes copies of the references that the Examiner did not acknowledge from the IDS filed January 28, 2004. This additional IDS also lists US patent references cited by the Examiner in the parent application.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner acknowledge the IDS filed concurrently herewith.

V. CONCLUSION

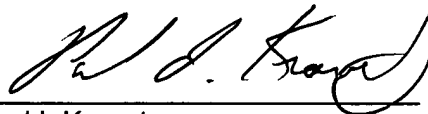
In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If any further fees are required in connection with the filing of this response, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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